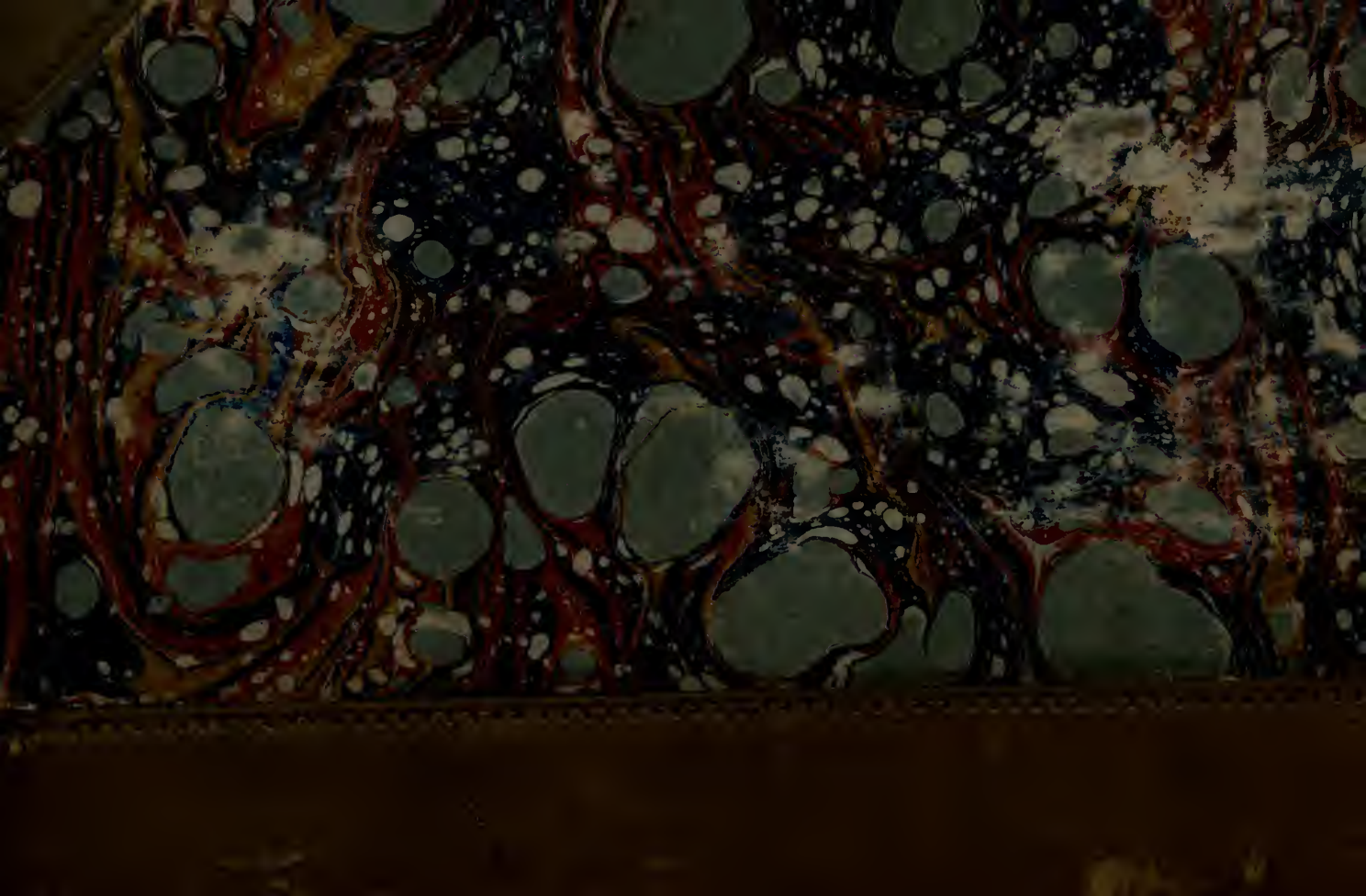

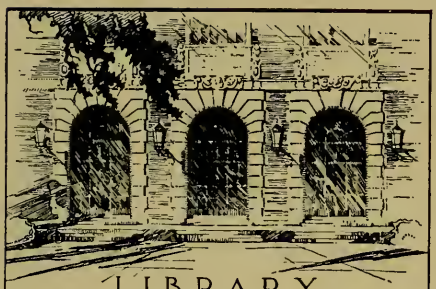

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THE

"MISSION"

OF

RICHARD COBDEN.

By LORD HOBART.

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THE

"MISSION" OF RICHARD COBDEN.

BY LORD HOBART.

It is long since there left the world any one who deserved so well of it as Richard Cobden. To say this is indeed, in one sense, to say but little. For the acts of those who have had it in their power to influence the destinies of mankind, mankind has in general small reason to be grateful. In account with humanity, the public characters have been few indeed who could point with satisfaction to the credit side. But of Cobden's career there are results which none can gainsay. Vast, signal, and comprehensive, they disarm alike both competition and criticism. The two great triumphs of his life were the Repeal of the Corn Laws and the Commercial Treaty with France. Of these, the first gave food to starving millions, redressed a gigantic and intolerable abuse of political

power, saved an empire from revolutionary convulsion, and imparted new and irresistible impulse to material progress throughout the world; the second carried still further the work which the first had begun, insured, sooner or later, its full consummation, and fixed, amidst the waves of conflicting passions and jarring interests, deep in the tenacious ground of commercial sympathy, a rock for the foot of Peace.

But, though Cobden's public life is admired by most Englishmen, its real scope and nature are understood by very few. The prophet was not without honour, but he was almost entirely without comprehension, in his own country. Being asked on one occasion to take part in some project of interest or pleasure, he declined, on the ground that he had a "mission." What, then, was the "mission" of which he spoke? What was his distinctive character as a public man? The prevalent notion entertained respecting him among well-educated Englishmen is that he was the apostle of Free Trade, with a strong and rather dangerous tendency towards democracy and cheap government, and a disposition to peace at any price, on account of the costliness of war. It was reserved for foreigners to appreciate the greatest Englishman of his time, and for a foreigner to describe him justly. He repealed the Corn Laws;

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he fought and triumphed for Free Trade; he advocated peace; he deprecated national extravagance; and broke a lance, when occasion occurred, for political liberty. But these acts of his were but means to an end, illustrative of and subservient to the great object and idea in the service of which his energies were employed and his life sacrificed;—for the true definition of Cobden is that which the foreigner supplied —*an international man.*

It is strange, but it is true, that there had been no international men of any note before his time. For what is internationalism? Suppose a community which, from whatever cause, was without laws or government of any kind. In such a community every man would be the guardian of his own rights and interests, and compelled to bear arms, offensive and defensive, to maintain them. Bloodshed and every kind of misery, the hideous brood of anarchy, would abound. The state of affairs, even among savages, would be intolerable, and it would not be long before some one would propose the natural and obvious remedy — political institutions. Suppose further (the case is conceivable) that the proposal was received with contempt on account of its alleged impracticability. Suppose that it appeared, or was asserted, that there was such an utter dissimilarity of views and feelings, such an intense individuality,

in the different members of the community, that the attempt to unite them under any form of government or any regular system of law was hopeless. Suppose, nevertheless, the author of the proposal to persevere. Suppose him to contend that the alleged objection to it had no foundation in reality, but was the offspring, rightly considered, of mere prejudice and error;—that if men were, as they affirmed, thus self-centred, dissimilar, and antagonistic, they ought not to be so; and that, if the evil was real, the remedy rested with themselves. Suppose him to represent that if they were sensible men they would mitigate for the common good the intensity of their individualism; that if they were Christians political intercourse with each other should be a pleasure and not a pain. Imagine him to urge that for the sake of a mere sentiment, puerile, barbarous, and eminently pagan, they were deliberately impoverishing themselves, and leading a life proper to wild beasts rather than to men; that for the sake of a prejudice against each other, the result of deep-rooted habit, they were content to live in a condition of constant anxiety and suffering, diversified with occasional outbreaks of violence and bloodshed; and that, while they bitterly complained of the cost, physical and mental, of such a state of existence, they were ready to endure it rather than abandon the precious possession of individuality,

self-concentration, and self-dependence, handed down to them by their ancestors, with all its train of selfishness, jealousy, reciprocal animosity, and mutual misunderstanding, and which, by some strange hallucination, they were accustomed to look upon as a good rather than as an evil. Suppose all this, and you have supposed a case which actually exists. For the community of nations is a community precisely such as has been described; internationalism, in its ultimate scope and full development, is the doctrine supposed to be taught and rejected; and the teacher of that doctrine is the international man. Is it not strange, then, that Cobden should have been the first to teach it? still more strange that he should have been treated by the influential classes in his own country as a man who—well-meaning, no doubt, and eminently successful in his line—was yet hovering on the verge of lunacy?

Time out of mind the individuals of which the community of nations is composed have been willing to live as no other community could live—without a polity and without laws.* Of the terrible evils which result, one, though possibly not the greatest, is

* It need hardly be said that "International Law," which there are no established tribunals to administer and no means which can be relied on to enforce, is not law in the ordinary sense of the word.

war. This evil is so vast and conspicuous that it shocks and sickens humane men; and nothing is more common than to hear discussions on the question whether or no war is lawful. But if war is unlawful, then, in the case just supposed of a community consisting of individual persons, it is unlawful for each of them to protect his own rights in the absence of any government to protect them; a doctrine which no one possessed of common sense will be found to maintain. The natural and necessary result of international anarchy is war, just as the natural and necessary result of national anarchy is personal violence. But war is not, because international anarchy is not,* an inevitable condition of human affairs. War is, because international anarchy is, excusable enough as between barbarous communities. But among civilised and enlightened nations war is, because anarchy is, a scandal and a shame. It is this evil—this anarchy of nations—which has wrought more misery and prevented more happiness than perhaps any other of the self-inflicted torments of humanity. It is an evil which is as grave in its negative as in its positive aspect; which has cursed the world, not only by drenching it with

* To civil war, which is happily rare, and implies no maintenance of standing armies, this and the following statements are, of course, inapplicable

blood and letting loose upon it the foulest and fiercest passions, but by placing between the human mind and the intellectual and moral improvement resulting from the political and social intercourse of human beings an impassable barrier. But instead of being treated as a calamity of this hideous complexion, it is habitually looked upon with complacency and self-gratulation. In the opinion of the generality of men, this absence of political intercourse between nations is a happy disposition of Providence, which it would be impious in human creatures to disturb. The class of persons in this country who sing "Rule, Britannia," experience in doing so a thrill of conscious virtue and a comforting sense of duty done which confirms them in the practice. The Frenchman with his *gloire* and his *grande nation* feels elevated in the moral scale when he sings their praise. That which the world has wept in tears of blood, and but for which it would have worn an aspect, compared with that which it now wears, of perfect felicity, is treated as a subject for honest rejoicing to good citizens—for British jollification or French fanfaronade. If these men were heathens, there would be more to be said for them; though one might have thought that improved means of education and advancing intelligence would have taught even to paganism that the self-isolation of nations—the self-imposed and obstinately main-

tained severance of man from man, because they happen to be of a different race, or to have a different political history—was not an evil to be danced and sung about, but a calamity to be deplored. Being Christians, it is difficult to understand their error. Christianity cut the knot which intellectual advancement would sooner or later have untied, and if taught anything, taught this, that simply because they belong to a different race, or are geographically divided from them, men have no right to treat other men as socially and politically distinct from themselves; that the mutual estrangement, social and political, of members of the great human family is an evil of the same nature as the mutual estrangement of children born of the same parent; and that the exclusive regard of men for those with whom they are classed by the accidents of origin or of soil is a moral delinquency of the gravest kind. Be it remembered by those who meet, as they imagine triumphantly, considerations such as these with the words "Utopian" and "visionary" (words by which it may be remarked that every innovation in any important degree conducive to the general welfare has in its turn been stigmatised), that what is here contended for is not the possibility of immediate or proximate remedy, but simply the proposition that the acquiescence in an approval of a state of things so contrary to good

sense, to right feeling, and to the most vital interests of the world, is unworthy of intelligent and well-intentioned human beings.

The virtuous self-satisfaction which has just been noticed as attending upon the assertion and display of nationalism, and which opposes so fatal a bar to international concord and union, is based upon confused notions of patriotism, which is of two kinds—patriotism the virtue and patriotism the vice.

Patriotism the virtue is that feeling which, where it exists in a high degree, inclines a man to prefer to his own interests the interests of the country to which he belongs, and which, in however small a degree it exists, leads him to consider himself not as an isolated being with no concern but his own welfare, but as a member of a society whose welfare is his own. Patriotism the virtue makes the general well-being, as distinct from that of the individual in whom it resides, its study and its care. If either the existence or the well-founded claims of his own country as a member of the community of nations is threatened, it devotes itself, at whatever sacrifice, to their defence, just as it would devote itself to ward off any internal calamity of equal magnitude. It admits that, so long as nations remain politically isolated from each other, so long as they are unable by common agreement to terminate the anarchy which afflicts them, force is

the sole and legitimate protector of the rights of each; and that to compel a people against its will to submit to a foreign dominion is an injustice which must be resisted to the last. But the very essence of patriotism the virtue is self-sacrifice for the general good. It implies no approval or toleration of the anarchy of nations, or any idea that the interests of the particular country in which the patriot happens to live are paramount to those of the rest of the world. It is ready to sacrifice itself for the community to which it belongs, but it claims no right to decide as to the limits of that community. The boast of nationality is no part of the business of such patriotism. Indeed, the mental disposition in which it is generated is such as would rather incline a man, so far as is possible, to enlarge the bounds of his country, not by military conquest, but by peaceful amalgamation; for the temper and habit of mind which characterise the true patriot as the citizen of a state would find a fuller development and gratification when he became a citizen of the world.

Patriotism the vice is the moral opposite of the former. It is that feeling among citizens which imparts to the nation, considered as one of the component parts of a great community, that very selfishness which is repudiated by patriotism the virtue. It is that feeling which causes a nation

habitually to prefer its own to the general interest. The essence of virtuous patriotism is self-sacrifice; the essence of vicious patriotism is self-regard. One is the desire felt by a citizen for his country's advantage, even at the cost of his own; the other is the desire for his country's advantage because that country is his, at the cost of other nations. Patriotism the vice looks upon the life of nations as one long struggle for success at the expense of each other; holds that a state should deprecate, and if it has the power prevent, any increase in the wealth and prosperity of other states; that the "balance of power" should be disturbed; and appears to consider the fact that the world was not made exclusively for the benefit of one nation as a disposition of affairs to which nothing short of absolute compulsion should induce it to bow.

It is, then, by confounding these two kinds of patriotism that men are led to tolerate and approve the anarchy of nations. With true patriotism that anarchy has nothing in common, but, on the contrary, is essentially at issue. If illustration be required of this, it is to be found in the fact that the most devoted and disinterested patriot of our time—the Liberator of Italy—is also one of the very few distinguished men who have felt and avowed international aspirations. At the close of a campaign

unusually arduous and triumphant, he gave vent, in a letter which appeared in the public journals of the day, and was sneered out of court in the usual manner, to the trouble of his grand and benignant soul. Was war, he said, never to cease from the earth? Were nations to remain for ever disunited, with no thought but their own aggrandisement, and occupied in preparing themselves, at an enormous cost, to spring on the shortest notice at each other's throats? Was there no chance of a hearing for common sense and humanity, so that men, whether they were Italian, French, English, Austrian, Russian, or Prussian, should at length, after centuries of unwisdom, admit themselves to be members of a common family, whose interests should be considered as a whole, and there might be an end once for all to the long reign of anarchy and blood? "How foolish! how inconsistent!" exclaimed the whole chorus of Philistines and "Rule, Britannia" politicians. The folly and inconsistency were their own. The patriotism of Garibaldi is of that true kind which, as we have seen, is altogether distinct from nationalism. He fought to deliver his country, not from Austrians, but from Austrian despotism, as he would fight against any evil, internal or external, which afflicted her. But if (to suppose a case) Austrians and Italians, availing themselves of increased means of

intercourse with each other, and overcoming the prejudices of race and the difficulties of language, should after a time have agreed upon some federal alliance or some common form of government acceptable to the people of both countries, Cobden himself would not have been more overjoyed. Garibaldi would have fought and bled for freedom in America as freely as he fought and bled for her in Italy. For real patriotism is that which is free from any taint of egotism; sees in loss or injury to the country of other men loss or injury to its own; and would blush to accept benefits for a nation at the cost of the world at large.

It was the peculiar merit and the privilege of Cobden that he apprehended the truth here indicated, and made it the lodestar of his political career. But inasmuch as the time was not ripe for that full development of internationalism which consists in some form of political union, he saw that the work cut out for him in life was to prepare the way for it by habituating so far as might be possible the public mind to the idea, by removing obstacles to its progress, and by advocating and pushing forward every measure of legislation or policy which could tend to its realisation. Foremost among such measures was the liberation of commerce; and the first and most formidable monster to be assailed by the champions

of commercial liberty was the infamous English Corn Law. The attack upon a law which starved one country and impoverished the rest for the benefit of a few landlords was a task after Cobden's own heart; and he was supported and encouraged during the tremendous conflict by the feeling, little known to most of his coadjutors, that he was fighting, not for his own country only, but for all others; and that victory in the fight would be the first step towards the attainment of the grandest object of which a politician had ever dreamed—to break down the barriers of a narrow nationalism, and blend into one great community the nations of the world. For he knew that free trade in corn was but the prelude to the freedom, at no very distant time, of commerce generally; he knew also that freedom of commerce generally meant a community of interests which would grapple nations to each other with hooks of steel, and an increase of personal intercourse between their citizens—the sovereign remedy for that self-complacent nationalism which is the greatest obstacle to political association. It is certain that, of all expedients calculated to promote the objects in view, there is none so efficacious as this last. A new railway, or an improved steamboat service on a dividing sea, or the abolition of adventitious official impediments to travellers, may be of more avail than all the

speeches and writings of the most devoted philanthropist. For it must be obvious that there is a conceivable degree of social intercourse between nations of which some kind or degree of political association is the natural and necessary result. If, for instance, the communication between Englishmen and Frenchmen, instead of being limited, as it now is, to the yearly arrival of a hundred or two of the latter, sea-sick and miserable, in a grim and squalid locality, presided over by a hideously mutilated statue, and which they imagine to be London, and to the yearly influx into Paris of a stream of British tourists, contemptuous, ill-mannered, and unintelligent,—that communication was in every respect as constant and easy as the intercourse between adjacent counties of England, it is impossible that the two countries could remain long disunited. Manners, language, currency, laws, would gradually assimilate; and the result, sooner or later, would be political union. Every step in this direction is a step of which the importance cannot be overrated. In proportion as the intercourse of the citizens of one state with those of another became more familiar, nationalism would decline; war, though it would at times be inevitable so long as nations are under perfectly distinct governments, would be more and more reluctantly entered upon; until at length the work

would find its completion in political association, and all war, except civil war, be thenceforth at an end.

The blow which shattered the English Corn Law shook to its foundation the whole ingenious system by which, under the pleasant name of "protection to native industry," men had contrived to counteract a singularly beneficent provision of nature, having for its object their own material and social welfare; and the advantage thus gained was promptly followed up by the great soldier of peace and good-will. The war of tariffs is responsible for the war of bullets and cold steel. Men think twice before they cut the throats of those who are perpetually engaged in filling their coffers. If the trade of this country with Russia had been as great as her trade with the United States, what chance would the "war-at-any-price party" have had in the dispute about the Russian War? If her trade with the United States had been as small as her trade with Russia, what would have been the probability that peace would have been preserved during half a century between the jealous and irascible parent and the undutiful and now gigantic son? But protection not only generates war, by removing the inducement to peace which is afforded by identity of interest; it fosters and encourages that deeper and wider evil of which

(as we have seen) war is one of the many calamitous results—the sharp division of mankind into distinct societies, resolutely set against any approach to political communion. Protection, besides keeping nations poor, keeps them apart in sullen rivalry, and hostility worse, because more widespread and enduring, than that of the battle-field. The very fact that nations are habituated to consider it a duty to enrich themselves at the expense of other countries, tends to exclude from their minds the idea of association, and to encourage that of self-seclusion; and the case is not altered by the circumstance that instead of enriching they are impoverishing themselves. Men will never look upon each other as members of one family, or yearn after that political association for want of which they suffer so bitterly, as long as they are taught to consider the gain of other countries to be the loss of their own, and are deprived of that inducement to communication with each other which commercial unity both directly and indirectly provides. The Commercial Treaty with France, forced as it were upon both countries by the strong will and earnest faith of one extraordinary man, was therefore (and he knew it) a magnificent stroke of work in the cause which he had at heart. It was, moreover, a success, in its very nature prolific of further successes. Already an arrangement similar in principle—mainly

through the unremitting exertions of one who, during the arduous struggle of which the prize was the Treaty with France, stood at Cobden's right hand, caught his spirit, and realised the grandeur of his aims — has been made between this country and Austria; foreign nations among themselves have begun to imitate the example; and one of the most obstinately defended strongholds of international exclusiveness and discord is in a fair way of being levelled with the ground.

Next to commercial monopoly, the most fatal enemy to internationalism was the pseudo-patriotic sentiment already noticed, and which Cobden accordingly attacked with uncompromising vigour and pertinacity. That one Englishman was equal to three Frenchmen, and that in addressing himself to the task of proving it he was doing that which was pleasing rather than otherwise to the supernal powers, was the form which for a long time was taken by this sentiment in the illiterate British mind. With the secession of the French Revolutionary War into the background, this impression has become less actively prevalent; but there is still a lurking conviction in the minds of a large number of persons in this country that to fight Frenchmen, and probably also Russians and Americans, is in itself a highly moral and laudable act. War is generally felt to be a

calamity, but a calamity qualified by the consideration, first, that there is a natural antagonism between Britons and foreigners which is, as it were, part of the scheme of creation; and secondly, that it is more in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that British interests, British fleets and armies, and British ideas should prevail, than those of any other nation. Thus it is very commonly, though most untruly, asserted by very well-meaning and in other respects reasonable men, in defence of the war waged for twenty years by this country without a shadow of justification with France, that but for that war the power and influence of Great Britain among European states would have been very much less than they now are; from which argument it is to be inferred that, in the opinion of those who use it, any amount of injustice, slaughter, and suffering would kick the beam if the interests of their own country were in the other scale. Until ideas such as these are totally and irrevocably eradicated, there is little hope for internationalism.

Another and most mischievous institution of the same class was the Civis Romanus. This personage, and the intolerable national arrogance on which he depends for existence, was the object of Cobden's most determined hostility. In China he took the form of an adventurous skipper mistaken, apparently

not without some reason, by Chinese officials for a pirate; in Greece, that of a Spanish Jew, whose miserable squabble with the Government was settled by the conclusive if not logical argument of a British fleet; in Brazil he was alternately a drunken midshipman incarcerated for inebriety, and the owner or insurer of a British ship which the winds and waves, regardless of Roman citizenship, had cast upon an outlandish coast, and which was pounced upon by the nomad and semi-savage wreckers of the place, for whose misdeeds the Brazilian Government, finding itself powerless to punish them, was magnanimously chastised, and threatened with further chastisement for not having done so, by the Government of a country twenty times as powerful as its own. Against this calamitous individual the great Internationalist waged incessant war; nor were his efforts entirely unattended with success, if we are to judge by the fact that this particular enemy has of late considerably moderated his pretensions. The monstrous doctrine that a state has the right to require for any of its own subjects, who choose to visit or reside in a foreign country, treatment which is not in accordance with the laws or customs of that country, or an amount of legal protection which no native of that country ever dreams of obtaining, has recently shown somewhat less readiness to parade itself before the

public view. The mental condition, however, in which it was generated unhappily survives, and should be resolutely opposed by all right-minded men.

Closely allied to nationalism and Roman civism, fighting by their side the battle of selfishness and barbarism against civilisation and humanity, and as such assailed by Cobden with singular power though with but too little success, was the policy of "bloated armaments." That policy has been the fashion in this country ever since the war with Russia, which, finding its support in hobgoblin arguments and panic the most anile, appears to have bequeathed them as a lasting legacy to the nation. Scarcely had that useless and disastrous conflict ended, and the pocket of the British taxpayer begun to feel the better for the change, when the bugbear of French invasion for about the hundredth time cast its shadow over the land. It was promptly turned to account by that large class of persons who, actuated some by national vanity, called by themselves patriotic pride, others by less excusable motives, are the steady advocates of plethoric budgets; and the consequence is that the national expenditure is at the present moment greater than it was before the Russian War by some fifteen millions, almost the whole of which goes to the account of the army, navy, and coast defences. The triumph

of the old women has been complete. The preparation for war has been in the inverse ratio to the probability of it; for if there is one feature more indelibly stamped on contemporary history than another, it is the deep anxiety shown by the present ruler of France, throughout his long and prosperous reign, to be on amicable terms with this country. In response to his advances, its taxation was at once placed and has ever since continued on a war footing, and a volunteer army was created, respecting which kind of force, however, there is this to be said, that so far as it is a defence at all, it is (like chivalry) a cheap defence of nations. But for the enormous and steadily maintained annual expenditure on the regular forces there is literally no excuse whatever. From the point of view of the narrowest expediency, it is a blunder of the grossest kind. For, unquestionably, to a country whose position, moral and physical, is that of Great Britain, the road to success in war lies in the maintenance during peace of an inexpensive nucleus of force, to be developed, when the necessity occurs, as only a free and energetic people, whose progress to commercial wealth has sustained little hindrance from the tax-gatherer, can develop it. But it was not on the ground of expediency that Cobden fought the battle of retrenchment. He fought it, while deeply feeling its importance in a national,

chiefly from an international point of view. The curse of great standing armies is laid, not upon this or that nation only, but upon the whole civilised world; and it is the interest of humanity in general that demands its removal. "Si vis pacem, para bellum" is the comfort which the authors of this calamity—presuming on the general incapacity to perceive that "si vis bellum, para bellum" is much less questionably true—are in the habit of offering, with considerable success, to their deluded victims. The argument, however, which is most directly responsible for the vast preparations for war which nations in their ardent attachment to peace have thought fit to make, is the argument that other nations are doing the same thing. Nation A arms itself to the teeth, and groans under a crushing burden of taxation, solely because nation B has done the same. Nation B, whose large armaments have very probably been raised for the repression of liberty among its own subjects, perceiving this step on the part of A, accuses it of hostile designs, and increases its own armaments accordingly, which leads to a further increase in the same direction on the part of A. This arrangement, considered as an elaborate contrivance for maintaining peace, and the political dialectics of which it is the result, is extremely curious. If any one suggests, as Cobden suggested, that there is something inex-

pressibly foolish and puerile in all this; that, if reason has not deserted the world, some agreement ought to be come to for reciprocal disarmament; or that, in the event of this being found impracticable, then if there be a nation free, and therefore requiring no standing armies to prevent its being so,—insular, and therefore having, on the one hand, little direct interest in Continental quarrels, and, on the other, provided by Nature herself with a peculiar and still formidable defence against hostile aggression — if there be a nation superior to all others in commercial wealth, and therefore able, in case of emergency, to develop a strength which would far more than counterbalance any insufficiency of preparation; that nation ought to be the first (for one of them must be the first) to quit the path of folly, and set the example of a return to conduct in some degree rational and dignified:—if any one ventures to make this suggestion, he is forthwith consigned to the limbo of political enthusiasts, and no longer looked upon as a sane man in this country. Nor, indeed, if the recent foreign policy of this country be considered, is it wonderful that such suggestions should appear to be madness by its side. To reject with a sneer every proposal for the prevention of war by mitigating, in however imperfect a degree, the anarchy of nations—to meet with a curt and

insolent negative any suggestion for the adjustment, by general agreement, of difficulties which threaten universal war; to refuse to refer to arbitration an important question, admitted on all hands to be one of difficulty, in dispute with a great and kindred people, on the turgid and irrelevant plea that "Britain is the guardian of her own honour," is a course of conduct of which those who approve are consistent enough in treating common sense and right feeling as insane. To decline all interference in the affairs of foreign states, not for the sake of humanity, but of self-interest, and maintain at the same time an attitude of hostile expectation against the world; to incur a vast expenditure, on the ground that it is required for the protection of the national existence and interests, which nobody threatens, and with the result of providing an excuse for the adoption by foreign powers of a similar course, and so to endanger the general peace and add to the general misery, is a policy to whose advocates internationalism may well appear to be the product of a disordered mind. But an insanity whose result is the direct opposite of such a policy, is an insanity to be coveted by all reasonable men.

Representative reform was another subject which lay near to Cobden's heart; but this, too, he valued not only for itself, but for its connection with inter-

nationalism. Nationalistic egotism is a malady proper to despotic and oligarchic institutions. The moral code which makes selfishness and jealousy, if not dislike, of foreigners a part of the whole duty of nations, is peculiar to the class which in most states monopolises political power; the great majority of citizens are guiltless of its existence. John Bullism is not a democratic vice. The British Lion has a roar which is terrible chiefly among the upper classes, and aggravates his voice when he mixes in society less refined. The wars of civilisation have been for the most part wars, not of nations, but of governments; for war is not only a game which kings would not play at if their subjects were wise, but a game at which they would very seldom play if their subjects were free. Into the causes of this phenomenon it is not necessary to inquire. It is probably due partly to the fact that large standing armies are a necessity of life to despotic institutions, and that large standing armies must be employed, partly to the natural and jealous exclusivism of governing classes, and partly to the affinity and sympathy of all liberal ideas. What is certain is, that for the complete realisation of internationalism in its ultimate result, political association, it is requisite that nations in general should possess a very large measure of real political liberty; and that, according to the degree in

which they possess it, they will be capable of appreciating the advantages of such association, and of comprehending and avoiding the evils incidental to its absence. Complete political liberty once established in the world, some form of international federation would be the natural result. Nationalism, the offspring of class interests and monopolised power, would gradually disappear; armaments maintained for the repression of freedom would no longer afford incessant provocation and occasion for war; and men would begin to ask themselves, in wonder, on what possible ground of reason or self-interest they had been for centuries the enemies and rivals of their fellow-men.

It is the duty of those to whom the memory of Richard Cobden is the memory of a greatness, not only beyond question and almost beyond rivalry, but of a wholly original kind—a greatness which, while it filled a vast chasm in political philosophy, was rich in a new promise and possibilities hitherto unimagined for the happiness of mankind, and which, at the same time, neither was nor is generally appreciated or understood—to see that his name appears in history, not under the light of a fictitious and commonplace distinction, but in its own peculiar and enduring lustre, and takes its appropriate place in the hearts and in the minds of men. It is well

that political societies should be founded in his name; it is better that they should accurately represent his character, and carry forward with faithfulness and discrimination the work which he began. There is fear lest the most precious political truth that has been taught in the world should be lost to it for ever—buried once for all in the grave at Midhurst. It is not the advocacy of liberal principles more or less "advanced" which entitles a man to be considered a disciple of Cobden. "Peace, retrenchment, and reform" is, it is true (or rather was), the motto of the Liberal party, and commercial freedom is inscribed on its banners; but those who claim to follow such a leader must not be content to rest in these things as final—must see beyond, and in part resulting from these things, a new policy and a happier age—must believe as he believed, that it is no idle dream, no vain chimera of the poet or the enthusiast, but a rational and a practical proposition, that men may be brought no longer to look upon difference of race, creed, and climate as a necessary obstacle to political unity. Whoever among them can write a line of telling English, or speak one sentence worth listening to upon a platform, should take this for his theme. On the one hand, to familiarise the idea in the minds of men; on the other, by every expedient of scientific enterprise, legislative improvement, or

private effort, to promote identity of interest and facilitate personal intercourse between the citizens of different states, are the two great objects to be kept in view. Above all, let the lovers of freedom remember that there is a tyranny more fatal than any which they oppose—the despotism of words. Calling names is the weapon of ignorance and folly, wielded with deadly effect, in the battle against truth. Assail a really humane and sensible project, however startling to prejudice, with the most subtle argument, enforced by the most consummate eloquence, and it will resist; call it "humanitarian," and it will succumb. Reason ever so long against a scheme fraught with advantage to the world, and you may reason in vain; call it "visionary," and (if only it has novelty sufficient to give colour to the charge) the most thoughtful men will desert its cause. In the present case there is the same danger. It may be "visionary" to imagine that a change which is opposed to inveterate prejudice and time-encrusted tradition will be other than gradual and remote. It is not visionary to suppose that, in spite of prejudice and tradition, the way may be prepared for the advent of reason and humanity; it is not visionary to believe that separation into distinct and isolated communities, with no objects but those of self-interest, and no relations but those of rivalry and hostility, is not the

normal condition of the civilised world; and that in the crusade which Cobden preached, not to rescue holy sepulchres from sceptical custody, but the hearts of men from the dominion of selfishness, envy, hatred, and cruelty, there is real hope for the human race.